



BOROUGH OF BEDFORD.

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**REPORT**  
OF THE  
**SCHOOL**  
**MEDICAL OFFICER**

For the Year 1944.

SCHOOL MEDICAL DEPARTMENT,  
TOWN HALL,  
BEDFORD.

*March, 1945.*

*To His Worship the Mayor, the Aldermen and Councillors, and the Members  
of the Education Committee of the Borough of Bedford.*

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1944.

My thanks are due to the Director of Education and his staff, and to the staff of the School Medical Service for their co-operation in carrying out the work.

Though this report is addressed to the Town Council, already this body as a Local Education Authority is *in articulo mortis*, and will shortly be defunct, so that it will no doubt fall to its successors to receive the report.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

G. K. BOWES,

*School Medical Officer.*

P.S.—(Oct. 1945). An unexpected delay occurred between writing this report and sending it to the printers. It has been left as originally written.

# Annual Report

OF THE

## School Medical Officer

For the Year 1944.

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The average school population during the year was 5,628, of which 4,786 were classified as residents and 842 as evacuees. The school population thus remains considerably above its pre-war figure.

### Scope of Inspection.

This remained unchanged during the year.

### Nutrition.

The nutritional state of the children remained good, and showed, if anything, an improvement on the pre-war condition.

I am indebted to the Director of Education for the following figures relating to school milk and meals.

In connection with the provision of milk, the return made to the Ministry of Education in October, 1944, showed that 78 per cent. of the total children on the elementary school roll were having milk as against 77 per cent. in October, 1943. The actual numbers were as follows :

No. of children having 2 bottles daily	...	...	1894
No. of children having 1 bottle daily	...	...	2378

Free milk supplies were arranged for 270 children as compared with a total of 244 in the previous year. The number of Bedford children receiving free milk during December, 1944, was 34, and the number of evacuees 231.

Regarding the provision of school meals, during 1944 three school feeding kitchens were producing to full capacity. These kitchens supplied daily :—

Breakfasts	...	...	...	...	...	30
Dinners	...	...	...	...	...	1400
Teas	...	...	...	...	...	60

to school children and children attending wartime nurseries in the borough.

It is expected that by the time this report is printed three new kitchens will be opened at Queen's Park, Clapham Road and Goldington Road Schools, capable of producing another 1,350 meals daily.



Thus, by 1st April, 1945, all school departments in the borough will be receiving school meals.

Since the arrangements referred to in my last report, the milk supplied to the schools and the results of bacteriological examinations have been generally satisfactory.

### **Pediculosis.**

The number of individual children found unclean was 468 (including 386 residents and 82 evacuees) which shows a progressive reduction on the figures for the previous years as the following table indicates.

Year.						Number Unclean.
1941	...	...	...	...	...	1133
1942	...	...	...	...	...	883
1943	...	...	...	...	...	575
1944	...	...	...	...	...	468

The method of working was the same as that described in my last year's report.

During the year 34 sessions were held for treatment of verminous conditions. 367 children, including 318 residents and 49 evacuees, were treated; while 634 attendances in all were made, 542 of resident children and 92 of evacuees.

Seven children were cleansed under Section 87 of the Education Act, 1921, but it was not found necessary to take legal action in any cases.

### **Scabies.**

Scabies still remains a source of trouble notwithstanding the fact that the prevalence of this condition is said to be on the decline in the country generally. In all, 59 cases, including 44 residents and 15 evacuees, were discovered among school children at inspections in the schools or in the clinics. The total number of cases, in which the figures just given are included, whether discovered through the School Medical Service or by notifications from doctors or by enquiries of Health Visitors, was 186 resident children and 46 evacuees. The general arrangements for treatment remained as for previous years.

### **Treatment of Tonsils and Adenoids.**

Up to the present time, on account of difficulties which appeared insurmountable, the Town Council had not been able to bring into being a formal scheme for operational treatment of tonsils and adenoids; although, in fact, the County Hospital do treat any children referred to them. During the year under review negotiations were opened with the County Hospital, the authorities of which agreed to treat children referred to them by the Local Education Authority in conformity with plans approved by the Ministry of Education. The arrangements necessitated new buildings, so are not at present in operation, but it is to be hoped that they will come into operation in the near future.

**Infectious Diseases.**

Scarlet fever among school children has been less prevalent than in the immediately preceding years of exceptionally high prevalence, as the following figures show.

Year.						Number of Cases.
1940	...	...	...	...	...	135
1941	...	...	...	...	...	86
1942	...	...	...	...	...	209
1943	...	...	...	...	...	107
1944	...	...	...	...	...	35

The type of case occurring has been very mild.

Diphtheria has been almost absent from the schools during the past two years, as the following table shows.

Year.						Number of Cases.
1940	...	...	...	...	...	3
1941	...	...	...	...	...	21
1942	...	...	...	...	...	12
1943	...	...	...	...	...	1
1944	...	...	...	...	...	2

Though it cannot yet be claimed that the number of children immunised is enough to prevent risk of an epidemic, it is probable that the large and increasing proportion immunised will now and in the future render the chance of epidemics less likely.

No other infectious diseases require special comment.

**Speech Therapy.**

In November, 1943, Miss M. Cullen was engaged as part-time speech therapist by the Education Committee. The appointment was made in the first place on an experimental basis. After a report on six months working it was decided to continue the appointment. At present two sessions at clinics a week are devoted to this work, one at the School Clinic, 30, Bromham Road, and one at the School Clinic, 29, Barford Avenue. In addition two sessions a month are devoted to visiting schools, and, when necessary, children in their homes.

The following table shows the work carried out.

Number of Sessions held.	Number of Children under Treatment during the year.	Number Discharged.	Number still undergoing Treatment.
75	48	22*	26

\* This figure includes 14 cured, 2 gone away, 2 left school, 4 failed to attend regularly.

**Conclusion.**

It is again possible to report that war conditions have caused no deterioration in the physical health and well-being of children. Nutrition remains good; pediculosis continues to decrease, largely no doubt on account of energetic treatment; scabies continues troublesome but there are indications



that a decrease may be expected in the future ; infectious diseases generally show a diminished prevalence in comparison with earlier war years, though diseases which showed increased prevalence in those earlier years were, to speak generally, of mild type. On the whole, therefore, the acute problems arising out of the war, which have affected the physical health of the children have been fairly well solved. It may indeed be said that their solution has been easier than the solution of those chronic problems which, during the war, they have tended to obscure, but which will regain prominence again after the war, a consideration which should prevent too easy complacency.

MEDICAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT RETURNS.  
Year ended 31st December, 1944.

Table I.

MEDICAL INSPECTIONS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.			
A.—ROUTINE MEDICAL INSPECTIONS			
(1) No. of Inspections :			
Entrants 1033 (162), Second Age Group 1065 (230), Third Age Group 578(146)			
Total			2676(538)
(2) No. of other Routine Inspections :			
Grand Total			2676(538)
B.—OTHER INSPECTIONS.			
No. of Special Inspections and Re-Inspections ... .. 6653(1040)			

Table II.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE NUTRITION OF CHILDREN INSPECTED DURING THE YEAR  
IN THE ROUTINE AGE GROUPS.

Number of Children Inspected	A (Excellent)		B (Normal)		C (Slightly subnormal)		D (Bad)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2676 (538)	1849 (367)	69.10 (68.22)	711 (152)	26.56 (28.25)	116 (19)	4.33 (3.53)	— —	— —

Table III.

GROUP I.—TREATMENT OF MINOR AILMENTS (excluding uncleanliness).			
Total Number of Defects treated or under treatment during the year under the Authority's Scheme ... .. 1603 (199)			
GROUP II.—TREATMENT OF DEFECTIVE VISION AND SQUINT. (Under the Authority's Scheme.)			
Errors of Refraction (including squint) ... .. 322 (78)			
Other defect or disease of the eyes (excluding those recorded in Group I) ... —			
Total			322 (78)
No. of Children for whom spectacles were (a) Prescribed ... .. 196 (49)			
(b) Obtained ... .. 183 (44)			
GROUP III.—TREATMENT OF DEFECTS OF NOSE AND THROAT. (Under the Authority's Scheme.)			
Received Operative Treatment ... .. —			
Received other forms of Treatment ... .. —			
Total number treated			—

**Table IV.**  
**Dental Inspection and Treatment.**

(1) Number of children inspected by the Dentist :										
(a) Routine age-groups	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6331	(930)
(b) Specials	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	284	(20)
(c) TOTAL (Routine and Specials)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6615	(950)
(2) Number found to require treatment	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3223	(439)
(3) Number actually treated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2787	(366)
(4) Attendances made by children for treatment	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3400	(535)
(5) Half-days devoted to :—										
Inspection	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	52	(6)
Treatment	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	438	(53)
									Total	490 (59)
(6) Fillings :—										
Permanent Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1157	(144)
Temporary Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	(0)
									Total	1162 (144)
(7) Extractions :—										
Permanent Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	410	(70)
Temporary Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3035	(298)
									Total	3445 (368)
(8) Administrations of general anaesthetics for extractions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1453	(169)
(9) Other Operations :—										
Permanent Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1048	(219)
Temporary Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
									Total	1048 (219)

**Table V.**  
**Verminous Conditions.**

(i) Average number of visits per school made during the year by the School Nurses or other authorised persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
(ii) Total number of examinations of children in the schools by School Nurses or other authorised persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17833(2270)
(iii) Number of <i>individual</i> children found unclean	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	468 (82)
(iv) Number of <i>individual</i> children cleansed under Section 87 (2) and (3) of the Education Act, 1921	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7 (0)
(v) Number of cases in which legal proceedings were taken :—									
(a) Under the Education Act, 1921	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—
(b) Under School Attendance Byelaws	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—

**Table VI.**  
**Blind and Deaf Children.**

Number of totally or almost totally blind and deaf children who are *not* at the present time receiving education suitable for their special needs.

	1. At a Public Elementary School	2. At an institution other than a Special School	3. At no School or Institution
Blind Children	—	—	1*
Deaf Children	—	—	—

\* Awaiting admission to a Residential Special School for Blind Children.

N.B.—Figures in brackets denote evacuees included in total.

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